

Having thus, described the invention, what is claimed is:

1. A rotary steering damper for a motorcycle, said steering damper comprising;
  - a damper housing having an oil chamber formed therein and having a plurality of fluid flow channels in fluid communication with said oil chamber;
  - a damper shaft attached to and extending downwardly from said damper housing;
  - a vane disposed in the oil chamber of the housing and attached to the shaft for concurrent pivotal movement therewith, said vane operating to effectively partition the housing oil chamber into left and right oil chambers; and
  - a hydraulic pressure control valve for varying an attenuating force of said steering damper;wherein, upon pivotal rocking motion of said vane in said housing, working fluid flows between the left and right oil chambers to generate attenuating force,
  - and wherein said housing is adapted to be attached to one of a vehicle body frame side and a steering system side while said shaft is adapted to be attached to the other of said vehicle body frame side and said steering system side, and said housing is adapted to be disposed above a top bridge;
  - wherein said damper housing comprises a housing extension which extends rearwardly behind said top bridge; and wherein said steering damper further comprises an actuator for said hydraulic pressure control valve, said actuator being disposed below said housing extension.
2. A rotary steering damper according to claim 1, characterized in that said housing is

adapted to be attached to said vehicle body frame side, and said shaft is adapted to be attached to said steering system side.

3. A rotary steering damper according to claim 1, wherein the actuator comprises an electric solenoid.

4. A rotary steering damper according to claim 1, wherein said housing comprises a base and a lid removably attached to the base.

5. A steering damper kit for use with a motorcycle, said kit comprising the rotary steering damper of claim 1, a linkage member comprising dual pivot connections, and a bifurcated steering torque transfer arm for connecting between said linkage member and said damper shaft of said steering damper.

6. A steering damper for a vehicle wherein a pressure control valve is interposed in an oil path formed in a damper housing provided between a vehicle body frame and a steering system such that said pressure control valve is controlled to vary the attenuating force upon operation of said steering system, characterized in that said pressure control valve comprises:

an electric pressure control valve provided in a connecting oil path for communicating an exit side oil path into which working fluid is discharged from an oil chamber of said damper housing and an entrance side oil path along which the working fluid returns to said oil chamber and operable to change the attenuating force upon operation of said steering system in accordance with an electric signal; and

a mechanical pressure control valve provided in a bypass oil path provided in parallel

to said electric pressure control valve in such a manner as to open when the pressure in said bypass oil path becomes equal to a predetermined value.

7. A steering damper for a vehicle according to claim 6, wherein a maximum opening pressure of said electric pressure control valve is set so that a lower limit value to a dispersion thereof is higher than a lower limit value to a dispersion of an opening pressure of said mechanical pressure control valve.

8. A motorcycle, comprising a frame having a head pipe with an integral flange extending rearwardly from a top portion thereof, and a steering column pivotally attached to said head pipe, said motorcycle further comprising a rotary steering damper comprising;

a damper housing having an oil chamber formed therein and having a plurality of fluid flow channels in fluid communication with said oil chamber;

a damper shaft attached to and extending downwardly from said damper housing;

a vane disposed in the oil chamber of the housing and attached to the shaft for concurrent pivotal movement therewith, said vane operating to effectively partition the housing oil chamber into left and right oil chambers; and

a hydraulic pressure control valve disposed in said damper housing for varying an attenuating force of said steering damper;

wherein, upon pivotal rocking motion of said vane in said housing, oil flows between the left and right oil chambers to generate attenuating force, and wherein said housing is attached to one of a vehicle body frame side and a steering

system side of said motorcycle, while said shaft is attached to the other of said vehicle body frame side and said steering system side, and said housing is disposed above a top bridge of said motorcycle;

wherein said damper housing further comprises a housing extension which extends rearwardly behind said top bridge; and wherein said steering damper further comprises an actuator for said hydraulic pressure control valve, said actuator being disposed below said housing extension.

9. The motorcycle of claim 8, wherein said damper housing is attached to said vehicle body frame side, and said shaft is attached to said steering system side.

10. The motorcycle of claim 8, wherein the actuator comprises an electric solenoid.

11. The motorcycle of claim 8, wherein said damper housing comprises a base and a lid removably attached to the base.

12. The motorcycle of claim 8, further comprising a linkage member comprising dual pivot connections, and a bifurcated steering torque transfer arm connecting said linkage member and said damper shaft of said steering damper.

13. The motorcycle of claim 8, further comprising a plurality of brackets situated between the steering damper and the flange on the head pipe.